**King County Transit Advisory Commission**

October 17, 2023

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Teleconference:

Link to join the meeting via computer: https://kingcounty.zoom.us/j/89048014880

Dial in information: 1 (253) 215-8782, Meeting ID: 890 4801 4880

**6:00 p.m. Welcome & Introductions**

- Name
- Pronouns, if you would like to share
- Access needs
- Check in question: It's spooky season! What is one scary movie or story that scared you when you were a kid?
- Present:
  - **TAC Members:** Lin Robinson, Sonja Tracy, Devin Branson, Prem Subedi, John Rodriguez, Angela Theriault
  - **KC Metro Staff:** Margarita Aguado, Jordan Hoover, Cristina Gonzalez, Jamie Holter
  - **Other:** Kobey Chew

- Question about applying for TAC.
  - Recruitment is now closed as of May, but likely we'll have another recruitment session soon.
  - Technical difficulties for one member. Meeting started once quorum was reached.

**6:15 p.m. Consent agenda, Announcements, September Meeting Recap**

- Vote: Meeting minutes – September 2023
  - TAC Member had edits for minutes. Liaison to confirm change before posting minutes.
    - TAC Members vote to approve meeting minutes.
    - TrEE (Transit, Economy, Environment) committee to vote to confirm new members. As of November, our new members will be able to vote. The first meeting with our new members will be November 21.
- September meeting recap, reflection, follow-up
  - Empowering Customers: Improving customer information to help make Metro the first choice.
  - Metro's Workforce Initiative

- Announcements
    - Appointments are planned for consent at the November TrEE committee meeting.
    - First meeting with new members: November 21st.

**6:30 p.m. Metro's Flexible Services: Metro Flex and Community Van**

- Presenters: Jordan Hoover Community Engagement Planner, Jamie Holter Rideshare Services Representative

  Refer to presentation content.

  *20 minute presentation, 20 minute Q&A*

  [*TAC action: ask questions, provide feedback*]

  - TAC Member: You mentioned 7 different areas. Could you name those areas again?
    - Response: Those service areas are Tukwila, Othello in Seattle, Rainier Beach/Skyway, Renton Highlands, Kent, Sammamish/Issaquah
  - TAC Member: When I lived in SeaTac last year, when I tried to learn more about Via I found out that SeaTac has been completely excluded from the service area. I didn't understand this, and it was frustrating because the light rail station borders SeaTac. Via didn't answer my emails. I moved to senior housing near Mt Baker Station. I was excited about Metro Flex and downloaded the app but was again told that I was out of the zone. I know we have good bus service here, but I don't understand why this whole area is excluded. There are a lot of non-driving elderly people though.
    - Response: We very carefully choose the areas that don't have as much access to transportation as others. Metro Flex areas are meant to be this in between area to connect to larger trips. In the past Mt Baker and Columbia City were both service areas. I don't have all the history of why they are no longer service areas. I know there is a lot of demand for metro flex around Seattle and King County. In an ideal world we would have metro flex in every area that lacks access to a dense transit network/fixed route service. As we expand in the future, we are looking at different areas that we are going to be expanding into. Thank you for sharing this information about the people that could benefit from this, especially elderly individuals.
  - TAC Member: How are zones prioritized?
    - Response: I can figure this out the exact parameters that we use, but I don't want to give you the wrong info. Would you like me to follow up with you?

        - TAC Member: I would, yes. I have been excluded twice.
- TAC Member – my original question was: how were the service areas selected? My second question is: has funding been allocated to expansion? Do we know when the expansion will happen? Will there be budgetary holdups for future expansions?
    - Response: Our near expansions are in Bothell with the extension of the Lynnwood Link. This one has already been budgeted for. Other expansions will come from collaborations between Metro and jurisdictions. Beyond that, we have a lot planned and are in careful conversations about this. Would you like me to follow up with you?
        - TAC Member: No that answers my question. Thank you very much.
- Jordan showed demonstration of how Metro Flex works.
    - TAC Member: So, you can only be picked up and dropped off within the same zone, correct?
        - Response: Correct. You may have to transfer buses or light rail, but the FLEX vehicles operate within the same zone.
    - Presenter: We are using this METRO Flex Service in a pilot project to expand service to ACCESS paratransit users. They can request on demand trips. I also staff APAC, which Prem is also on. We're expanding this pilot project with ACCESS. Access users can request day-of rides.
    - TAC Member: I'm curious. How many vans are available at one time in one zone, and how many drivers do you have available? Metro buses seem to be short drivers and I'm curious if this project is in a similar situation.
        - Response: Metro Flex is run by a contractor: Via Transit. They drive and do maintenance on vehicles and must pay a living wage to drivers. I can follow up with the exact number of vehicles and drivers. When it comes to drivers and vehicles in a specific zone, we're constantly loading the zone differently based on the amount of trip requests we're seeing. Rainier Beach skyway is our most popular and sees hundreds and hundreds of trips every day. Because the are vans and not large buses, Metro Flex has an easier time finding drivers because drivers don't need the additional training to drive a big bus.
    - TAC Member: I know there are other services. It sounds like Flex is combining several services. Are there plans to expand the services that Flex partners with?

        - Response: Flexible services includes Metro Flex and Community vans. This is part of a larger service called contracted services. This includes DART (Dial a Ride Transit). Access ridership is up a lot too.
        - Response: I think one of the things that Flexible services in Metro is doing is recognizing that we have 2.1 million people in King County and every community is different and has different needs. It's important to remember that in 2014 we reached out to communities and asked what they want. Now we have groups like TAC to ask, "Is this what you need? Is this what you want? Is this where you want us to be in ten years?" We digest this feedback and bring it back to our meetings in constant conversations. This is what our folks who care about transportation are telling us. Metro Flex has a defined service, service area. DART and ACCESS have targeted customers. This recognizes that not everyone has the same needs. I just want to explain a bit about how we got here and the value of these kinds of meetings. This is a malleable, flexible service, and we're always looking for feedback.
- Presenter: See presentation for Community Van explanation.
- Presenter: Trailhead Direct is a fixed route bus service that takes people from Downtown Seattle and over to Mt Si
    - TAC Member: This is a phenomenal service! I always thought Community Vans were for people carpooling for work, but that must be a different program.
        - Response: We have so many programs! How do people keep this straight? We need folks like you to be ambassadors. Van pool is for work. Community van is the fun van. It's for everyone.
    - TAC Member: Would you help connect people with drivers for their trip? Are the vans wheelchair accessible?
        - Response: Yes, we connect you with the driver. The capacity of the building depends on the needs of the trip. Depending on the type of mobility device someone has, car seats, etc., we can determine how many people can fit in the van.
    - TAC Member: Do you all have a list of the most popular places the vans visit?
        - Response: We are in the process of trying to figure that out. Every month I pull data. Certain community members love Community Van and go to the same places every month. For example, there's a group of people that go shopping in Shoreline every month. At UW Bothell there is a senior center, and they have a driver and like to go to a variety of places. If a senior center has 5 people

going to, for example, the Arboretum, you can call and ask where people are going. And the community transportation coordinator can let them know about trips being planned and people can join. The more data we have and the better we can prove people with maps of where people go, we can better serve people.

    - TAC Member: Thank you so much. I used to ask if there are ways for busses to take people into the park. This is getting closer to that.
        - Response: We started a partnership this summer with KC Parks. With the success of Trailhead Direct, we were able to partner and begin taking people into the parks.
- TAC Member: I'm trying to envision, what if you have 15 people? Is it possible to have 2 or 3 vans go together?
    - Response: Yes. In each jurisdiction, we have 3 vans. In Vashon this summer a woman booked three vans to take people to a wedding from the ferry dock, and back to the ferry dock after the wedding. For $2.75 per person!
- TAC Member: Do you have to live in a certain district, or can I do this wherever I am?
    - Response: You have to leave from the jurisdiction. It doesn't matter where you live. You and two friends can take Metro flex or a bus to a jurisdiction with Community Van and take Community Van from there. The service is not currently in Seattle because bus service in Seattle is good in Seattle but not in Skyway. One of our mantras at Metro is that Transportation is a Human Right. We try to give options to people who don't have them. We try to balance this out. We are int eh final stages of signing documents with Tukwila. People can take Access to Tukwila.
    - Response: I'll connect you with our community coordinator.
- Presenter: We count on people like you to be ambassadors for this program.

**7:10 p.m.** **Good of the order**

- Discussed plan for next month due to holiday.
    - All members agree to meet November 14. Margarita will send an updated invitation to everyone.

**7:20 p.m.** **Adjourn**